# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# AGRICULTURE
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1300
ANSWERED ON:26.11.2007
AGRICULTURAL LAND
Barman Shri Hiten;Bhagora Shri Mahavir;Singh Shri Rakesh;Subbarayan Shri K.

**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the average agricultural land holding has been on a constant decline in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether increasing urbanization has posed the crisis of non-availability of cultivable land in the country;

(d) whether starvation like situation is arising for the farmers due to increasing commercial activities on the cultivable land in the country particularly in West Bengal;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to save the cultivable land?

## Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA)

(a) to (c): As per available estimates, the average size of operational land holding has reduced from 1.41 ha in 1995-96 to 1.32 ha. In 2000-01 in the country. The availability of agricultural land is decreasing mainly due to increase in population and diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes such as urbanization, roads, industries etc.

(d) to (e): As per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, land falls under the purview of State Government. No report from the States is received regarding starvation like situation arising for the farmers due to increasing commercial activities on the cultivable land. State Government of West Bengal have specially reported that there is no starvation like situation in the State arising for the farmers due to increasing commercial activities on the cultivable land.

(f): Government of India is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Programme of State Land Use Boards (SLUBs) through Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA). Under this Programme, SLUB has been constituted in each State and State Governments have been advised to take appropriate steps for scientific use of land and also to ensure prevention of diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. In case of West Bengal, there is restriction of conversion of agricultural land under West Bengal Land Reform Act, 1955.

Government of India is also implementing various Watershed Development Programmes, namely,
(i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA),
(ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR),
(iii) Reclamtion of Alkali Soils (RAS),
(iv) Watershed Development Projects in Shifting Cultivation Areas

(WDPSCA),
(v) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP),
(vi) Desert Development Programme (DDP),
(vii) Integrated Wasteland Development Project (IWDP),
(viii) Watershed Development Fund (WDF) and
(ix) Externally Aided Projects (EAPs) for development of degraded lands in the country. Under these programmes, since inception upto X Five Year Plan, an area of about 50.83 million ha. of degraded lands have been developed. Parts of such developed lands are also brought under cultivation to maintain balance in different types of land uses.